

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5229

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POUCH ALL CONSULATES GENERAL IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, CA

SUBJECT: ONTARIO THRONE SPEECH OFFERS SOMETHING TO EVERY VOTER

1. IN THRONE SPEECH AT OPENING OF ONTARIO GENERAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MARCH 29, THE MINORITY PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT OF PREMIER DAVIS PRESENTED UNUSUALLY LONG 30 PAGE THRONE SPEECH IN WHICH THERE SEMS TO BE SOMETHING FOR EVERY VOTER. THRONE SPEECH ADDED TO CONFUSION OVER POSSIBILITY SUMMER ELECTIONS AS WHILE COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF PROGRAM WOULD SEEM

ELECTION DOCUMENT, IT ALSO DEFUSES MANY OPPOSITION ISSUES IN SITUATION WHERE TORIES WOULD LIKE TO SEE OPPOSITION NDP OR LIBERALS BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT AND CAUSE EPECTIONS. OPPOSITION REACTION RATHER UNNATURAL -- NDP OPPOSITION LEADER LEWIS SAID THRONE SPEECH SHOWED MINORITY GOVERNMENT WORKING AND LIBERAL LADER SMITH, WHILE SAYING SPEECH CONTAINED LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE, FELT IT WAS NOT MEANT AS ELECTION PLATFORM BECAUSE THERE WERE NO GIMMICKS OR GIVEAWAYS.

2. AMONG THRONE SPEECH PROPOSALS: EXTENDED FRENCH LANGUAGE

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INSTRUCTION TO BE NCOURAGED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BY CASE INCENTIVE FUNDING BY PROVINCE; ROYAL COMMISSION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION; EXTENSION OF RENT CONTROLS TO END OF 1978; POLICE BEHAVIOR CODE AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES; INCORPORATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HALTH AND SAFETY MEASUCES IN ONE STATUTE; IMPROVED LOAN RATES FOR SMALL BUSINESS; ROYAL COMMISSION ON PENSION PLAN WDMINISTRATION.

. ONLY IMMEDIATE AREA OF IRRITATION SEEMS TO BE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AS AN NDP MEMBER SUBMITTED PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL AT FIRST SESSION AND GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL TO HAVE ROYAL COMMISSION CONSIDERED BY BOTH NDP AND LIBERALS TO BE UNNECESSARY AND WAY OF AVOIDING ISSUE FOR ANOTHER YEAR.

4. COMMENT: BECAUSE OF VERY LENGTH OF THRONE SPEECH, MOST REACTION SO FAR FROM MEDIA HAS BEEN DIVIDED BETWEEN COVERAGE OF MANY POINTS CONTAINED IN SPEECH AND HOPE THAT IN WHAT MEDIA CONSIDERS USUAL TORY PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM, GOVERNMENT HAS SOME INTENTIONS OF SERIOUSLY ADDRESSING MANY ISSUES IN SPEECH WHICH HAVE BEEN TALKED ABOUT FOR YEARS. THE THRONE SPEECH COULD CERTAINLY INDICATE PREMIER DAVIS' INTENTION TO MOVE TO ELECTIONS THIS YEAR, AS WELL AS HIS APPARENT PHOBIA AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT BEING ACCUSED AS THE REASON FOR CALLING ELECTIONS. THE KEY TO THE PC STRATEGY WILL BE IN ONTARIO TREASURER MCKEOUGH'S BUDGET EXPECTED AT THE END OF APRIL, A BUDGET THAT MAY WELL CONTAIN ELEMENTS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE NDP AND WHICH WILL PROBABLY BOTH REACT TO WHAT THE TORIES CONSIDER AS WEAKNESSES IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET DUE THIS WEEK AND REFLECT THE PCS' EVALUATION OF THE TEMPER OF VOTER OPINION DEVELOPING DURING THE NEXT MONTH. THE MEDIA ARE ALREADY DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITIES THAT SHOULD FEDERAL FINANCE MINISTER MACDONALD NOT PROVIDE SNOUGH INCENTIVE TO BUSINESS INVESTMENT, THE PROVINCE MAY HAVE TO GO HEAVILY IN THIS REGARD, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR A REDUCTION IN CORPORATE TAXATION OR INCREASED INVESTMENT TAX BENEFITS WHICH COULD FORCE STRONG NDP REACTION AND POSSIBLY THE DOWNFALL OF THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT ON A CONFIDENCE VOTE IN THE LEGISLATURE.

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